



CANYON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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August 24, 2009

Toni Hardesty
Director
Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
1445 North Orchard
Boise ID 83706

Director Hardesty;

In order to identify and mitigate the real problem in vehicle emissions, Canyon County would like to submit the following proposal in compliance with Idaho Code 39-116B.

Canyon County proposes implementing a voluntary, one-year pilot program, for vehicles registered in Canyon County, wherein vehicle owners would voluntarily have their vehicles tested at Canyon County new vehicle franchise dealerships which are certified facilities. While the details have not been finalized, the plan includes Canyon County setting aside \$50,000 in our FY10 budget to assist low-income people in repairing their vehicles, if needed. Often, it is the vehicles of the lower-income residents which do not pass, and our goal is to assist them financially to repair their vehicles. Each test would cost \$20, with a portion of the funds paid to the dealer, a portion being returned to the "hardship repair fund," and a portion going into a drawing. Working with the Idaho Lottery, every time a vehicle is tested, the owner's name would go into a drawing for one of several \$5,000 cash cards. At the end of the year, names (the number to be determined by how many vehicles were tested) will be drawn and the winners given the cash card. Commissioners have discussed this plan with the Idaho Lottery, which agreed to operate the program for a \$100 fee.

Once this program is up and running, we will have an accurate idea of what percentage of vehicles registered in Canyon County do not meet emissions standards, and will use this quantifiable data as we revisit the issue and determine whether a permanent vehicle emissions testing program would be beneficial.

There are 182,176 vehicles registered in Canyon County; 11,222 of which are model-year 1980 or before, and 51,608 of which are model year 2003 or newer, leaving 119,346 vehicles falling into the age category for testing. Idaho Department of Transportation is unable to tell us the number of agricultural, hybrid, electric or diesel vehicles, and thus exempt from testing.

Conflicting information makes it difficult for us to know what is factual and what is not. According to information provided by COMPASS, Canyon County's NOx and VOCs can be reduced 252 tons a year, while DEQ is suggesting that the NOx and VOCs from Canyon County vehicles can be reduced by 282 tons. We would like to have the opportunity to run a pilot program and get some scientific numbers before subjecting our residents to a costly program without backup data.

According to the Ada County Highway District, traffic counts on Interstate 84 from Canyon County have decreased in the past year, which we believe will also help the valley's emissions. In addition, Valley Ride's inter-county ridership increased 64.1 percent from FY07 to FY08, and in the nine months of FY09, the Nampa-Caldwell ridership is up "in the teens" according to Valley Ride. This means even more vehicles are off the local highways as people begin to utilize public transportation.

Additionally, we propose instructing local law enforcement to be more aggressive in pulling over and ticketing vehicles which are obviously emitting some sort of pollution. Offenders will receive a traffic ticket, which would later be taken off their record, and the fine rescinded, if they get their car tested and repaired.

We have instituted 4-day work weeks within the county for those employees/departments that have that ability, have no-idling policies for county-owned vehicles, and are in the process of purchasing two hybrid vehicles to add to the county's fleet, replacing two gas vehicles. We have a tool on our county website to aid employees in finding co-workers with whom to carpool, use Pictometry when possible to reduce miles traveled, and offer financial and political support to Valley Regional Transit. We are also cooperating with Treasure Valley Partnership on their public outreach efforts to reduce miles traveled and paint emissions, and have worked with the public to educate them on the issue, and some solutions. We believe public education is a critical component of improving air quality in the Treasure Valley.

While 39-116B addresses vehicle emissions specifically, Canyon County believes there are many other ways we can work to maintain our valley's air quality. We have worked with our local fueling stations to implement Phase I vapor recovery, have enacted ozone-friendly landscape ordinances, and have tied our burning ordinance to the AQI Index, and aggressively enforce the ordinance. Burning ordinances have proven to reduce emissions by 102 tons a year for NOx and 511 tons a year for VOCs.

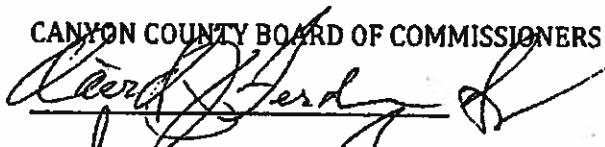
We have worked with others to educate businesses which use paints and solvents to do so in a manner which is less intrusive to air quality. We also believe that by working with Economic Development to bring businesses into Canyon County, our workforce will have a shorter distance to drive to and from work each day.

It is critical that we take the long view toward improving air quality in the Treasure Valley, and not simply think that industry and vehicles are the only polluters we can control. This is why we feel it's best for Canyon County to take a multi-pronged approach, and accumulate numbers and facts as we go.

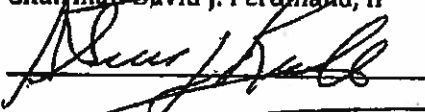
Please consider our proposal and feel free to contact us if you would like to discuss it further.

Sincerely,

CANYON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



Chairman David J. Ferdinand, II



Commissioner Steven J. Rule



Commissioner Kathryn Alder